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ABSTRACT

A typology of learning activities for business education was developed at Xavier University (Cincinnati, Ohio) based on three primary goals for internationalization of business education: awareness, understanding, and competency. Fifteen types of internationalization pedagogical activities are identified: international examples, international speakers, international cases, videotapes, international culture course in the United States, international culture course abroad, course taught abroad by local (foreign) faculty, international experience course, international exercise/simulation, international project, international internship in the United States, international internship abroad, international business plan, course taught abroad by U.S. faculty, and international information exchange. A chart presents curriculum goals for each of the learning activities; a second chart assigns the university's relative cost in achieving each learning activity. The typology can be utilized to select desired types of learning and activities that provide the most value given the budget available. In general, the types of activities which achieve competency cost more than those activities which achieve only understanding or awareness. (JDD)

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PAPERS ON INTERNATIONALIZING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

A Typology of Learning Activities for International Business Education

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A Typology of Learning Activities for International Business Education

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Abstract. This paper presents a typology of learning activities for business education. To develop the typology (1) three primary goals for internationalization are discussed: awareness, understanding, and competency and (2) fifteen different international learning activities are defined. Two separate typologies are then presented.The first classifies only activities by learning goals.. The second attempts to assign relative costs to each activity.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of internationalization of business school curricula has long been known. At a recent EMU Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions one of the speakers indicated that there is nc longer such a thing as international business; there is only business (Branan,1990). Those who do business with less than a world view will be handicapped.

According to a recent survey: "As a topic and an activity, internationalization of the business curriculum has existed in the United States for at least a quarter of a century, and even longer outside the United States. With one notable exception, the major underlying forces have remained essentially the same: increased internationalization of corporate and national economic activity, and business people. The notable exception was the 1974 change in AACSB accreditation standards that essentially mandated the internationalization of curricula -- a force that arguably caused more internationalization than all others, at least in US. business schools(Arpan,1993)."

At Xavier University we are continuously striving to improve the internationalization of our faculty, curriculum and our students. In doing this we have had to wrestle with both the wide range of different types of internationalization activities as well as the amount of cost and effort involved. In June of 1992 Xavier University implemented its first "required" Executive MBA international experience course. In order to assess the impact of this course a pre-post survey was conducted. The major purpose of this study was to measure attitude shift (Schuster and Zimmerman,1992).

Subsequently, a second study was conducted to measure the value to be gained from this type of experiential learning -- something that is not, or perhaps can not be as effectively achieved from classroom experience, textbooks, or other traditional textbook modes (Schertzer,Schuster and Zimmerman, 93).

Based on our experiences and the results of these studies we have compiled a variety of learning activities that can be incorporated when internationalizing business curricula. To better understand the tradeoffs between the different options and costs involved with these efforts, we have developed a typology of learning activities that can be utilized and adapted by anyone contemplating or evaluating the different options and costs associated with international business education.

INTERNATIONALIZATION GOALS

In creating our typology we have utilized Jeffrey Arpan's three primary goals for internationalization: awareness, understanding and competency. Arpan defines these goals as follows(Arpan, Folks and Kwoks,1993):

Awareness - Awareness is the absolute basic minimum for business students today. If they aren't aware that there is a broader world out there then they can't be expected to understand it or learn how to cope in it. Arpan suggests that awareness can be generally and relatively easily established by the "infusion" method: i.e., placing/infusing some international content in existing courses throughout the curriculum.

In short, awareness deals with the "what". It is a recognition that there are differences out there and that they are somehow related to a bigger picture.

Understanding - Understanding begins after awareness is established, and represents a significantly higher order of learning for the student, and of educational commitment and complexity or the institution. Business school students should at a minimum develop an understanding of the vital links between their own economy and people and the rest of the world, what causes international business, and how it affects domestic business, economic growth, standards of living and the process of doing business.

Once one is aware of "what" differences there are, one asks "why" these differences exist. The "understanding" goal generally requires more than infusion. It requires specific international courses and international course requirements.

Competency - Competency permits the transformation of understanding into action. "Awareness" provides information that there are markets outside the United States. "Understanding" provides information about why those markets operate the way they do.. "Competency" provides the specific skills needed to tap those markets, to transform knowledge into action. It permits taking the necessary action to strategically position a firm in a global context once a manager has developed an awareness and understanding of global competition and strategic positioning.

From a curricular standpoint, true international business competency is facilitated by a specialized degree of an international and multidisciplinary nature. It requires the development of business skills, foreign language and cross-cultural interaction skills, a global mindset, and, probably most importantly, the completion of a significant "overseas experiential component" during the students' program. In other words, true competency can only be developed by first-hand, on-site experiences.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In terms of learning activities we have identified fifteen types of internationalization pedagogical activities and/or tools for classification in this article. These particular activities were selected by the authors, based on their use of theseactivities at Xavier University. The descriptions of the activities, their estimated cost, and the effectiveness in achieving the various goals relate to the authors' own experiences with these activities. Others may have somewhat different experiences and wish to classify things a bit differently.

International Examples - A particular situation, activity, or transaction that involves a foreign firm or occurs in another country. Examples serve to illustrate a business principle from an existing textbook.

International Speakers - Either a business person from another country or a U.S. business person involved in international business to give added international perspective.

International Cases - Business situation set in another country, not just to illustrate one point or principle but to create the environment or situation of a business issue in another country or region.

Video Tapes - Can give a sense of another environment, give examples of business activities, demonstrate how business processes work.

International Culture Course In the U.S. - Demonstrating why business practices evolve in a certain way in particular countries or regions or to illustrate the impact of culture on business practices in general.

International Culture Course Abroad - Same information as in the above mentioned course, but the students are living in another country and forced to deal with the cultural differences that occur in everyday living.

Course Taught Abroad by Local (Foreign) Faculty - Having U.S. course topics taught abroad by someone from another country will necessarily inject a different perspective(awareness). If the reasons for the differences are discussed, understanding will occur. By virtue of living in another country students will learn how to adapt.

International Experience Course - Having an opportunity to be exposed to content other than what is in traditional U.S. business textbooks, by local speakers, interacting with local business people and experiencing business/social activities in another country can help in understanding the process and in learning to adapt.

International Exercise/Simulation - Having students complete an international exercise or computer simulation. Examples would be such exercises/games such as "BA FA,BA FA" or the Thunderbird School computer simulation. These provide both understanding and competency.

International Project - Having students work on a hypothetical project gives them the opportunity to gather information and address the challenges of an international market. They may not, however, have actual company or market data.

International Internship in the U.S. - Becoming aware of and understanding the business challenges, opportunities and constraints that occur in the day-to-day operations of an international business.

International Internship Abroad - Same as above with the addition of having to deal with cultural differences that occur in everyday business and living.

International Business Plan - Working on an international business plan for a real product for a real company that the company pays for and intends to utilize -- incorporates awareness and understanding in the action stage of making decisions.

Course Taught Abroad by U.S. Faculty - Business or topic concepts will be the same as they are for any other course taught by these faculty but students will experience the reality of cultural differences.

International Information Exchange - Being able to use information technology (e.g. Facsimile, INTERNET) to transmit information between students, faculty, business people in different countries.

TYPOLOGY MATRIX

Chart 1 displays our typology of learning activities for international business education. The fifteen types of learning activities that we have identified here are shown in rows and they are individually classified by curriculum goals in the columns. Again, the authors made these

classifications based upon their individual experiences using these activities. Others may have somewhat different experiences and therefor may modify the classifications to fit their own individual experiences.

Our schema in making these judgments was that activities which only let students know that there are differences in international markets and "what" those differences are provide *awareness* only. If the activity also explains "why" there is a difference then *understanding* is provided. Only if the activity provides specific skills to help students tap foreign markets do we feel *competency* is developed.

In evaluating Table 1, for instance, "international examples" provide only awareness while "international speakers" provide both student awareness and understanding. Only two activities, in our estimation; "international culture course abroad" and "course taught abroad by local (foreign) faculty" satisfy all three learning goals.

COST-VALUE RELATIONSHIP

Chart 2 shows our attempt to assign a relative cost to achieve each learning activity. The costs we are attempting to estimate here are the cost of each activity to the university - not to the student. The costs will vary widely based upon the country involved, number of video tapes, geographical location, etc. so our efforts are merely a starting point. You can assign your own costs based on your individual situation in applying this schema. We have arbitrarily assigned the following cost scheme:

$	Under $5000
$$	$5000 to $15,000
$$$	Over $15,000

By evaluating what each activity provides relative to its cost a university can evaluate the cost effectiveness and feasibility of various international pedagogical efforts. In looking at Chart 2 you can see that while international examples and speakers are inexpensive they also only provide awareness. Toward the bottom of the chart are activities which provide understanding and competency which are more expensive for universities. There are inexpensive activities which do provide understanding and competency, however: (e.g. international projects, internships in the US.)

This typology can be utilized to first of all select the type of learning that is desired and then select the activities that provide the most value given the budget available. The costs shown here are based on the authors own assessments. Individual users can assign their own costs to activities under consideration based upon individual circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

(1) Learning goals for the teaching/learning of international business can be addressed through the use of a variety of learning activities.

(2) Some activities are more effective in addressing certain goals than others. Some activities lend themselves to addressing several learning goals.

(3) It is the judgment of the authors, based upon their own experience with different learning activities, that the goals of achieving awareness, understanding and competency are hierarchical in the sense that achieving a particular goal necessitates having previously (or concurrently) achieving lower order goals.

(4) In general the types of activities which achieve higher order goals are judged to be more costly. For example, the kinds of activities which achieve competency cost an institution more than those activities which achieve only understanding or awareness.

(5) In designing curricula, planners must be careful to consider the cost of various activities, and not attempt to achieve goals which are beyond the resources of the institution.

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Chart 1

ACTIVITIES	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	COMPETENCY
Intl. Examples	X		
Intl. Speakers	X	X	
Intl. Cases	X	X	
Video Tapes	X	X	
Intl. Culture Course in U.S.	X	X	
Intl. Culture Course Abroad	X	X	X
Course Taught Abroad by Local (foreign) Faculty	X	X	X
Intl. Experience Course		X	X
Intl. Exercise/Simulation		X	X
Intl. Project		X	X
Intl. Internship in U.S.		X	X
Internship Abroad		X	X
Intl. Business Plan			X
Course Taught Abroad by U.S. Faculty			X
Intl. Information Exchange			X

Chart 2

ACTIVITIES	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	COMPETENCY
Intl. Examples	$		
Intl. Speakers	$	$	
Intl. Cases	$	$	
Intl. Culture Course in U.S.	$	$	
Course Taught Abroad by Local (foreign) Faculty	$	$	$
Intl. Project		$	$
Intl. Internship in U.S.		$	$
Intl. Information Exchange			$
Video Tapes	$$	$$	
Intl. Culture Course Abroad	$$	$$	$$
Intl. Experience Course		$$	$$
Intl. Exercise/Simulation		$$	$$
Course Taught Abroad by U.S. Faculty			$$
Internship Abroad		$$$	$$$
Intl. Business Plan			$$$